



Testimony of Jill Holmes Brown  
Chief Operating Officer  
Integrated Health Services Inc.

Board Chair CASBHC (Connecticut Association of School Based Health Center)  
H.B. No. 5037 (COMM) AN ACT ADJUSTING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE  
BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE THIRTIETH, 2023, AND MAKING APPROPRIATIONS  
THEREFOR Re: School Based Health Clinics- Department of Public Health Appropriations  
February 24, 2022

Dear Senator Abrams, Rep Dillion, Senator Somers, Representative Kennedy and members of the Health Sub-Committee thank you for the opportunity to offer written testimony on the budget.

I would like to thank you and the Governor for the recognition of School Based Health Centers and the vital role they play in providing care to kids in CT. I would urge you to support increased funding for the School Based Health Centers (SBHCs) in Connecticut.

School-Based Health Centers provide integrated, medical, dental and mental health care.

Removing the barriers to access care on site in the school allows for easier follow-ups and for a trusted relationship between students and teachers and families.

SBHCs allow students to stay in school and not miss any seat time, while their parents can remain at work, and their teachers can focus on their students' classroom and educational needs.

During COVID we were able to very quickly implement telehealth as a platform to provide services and continue to offer much needed physical exams, immunizations and mental health services. The pandemic made it clearer how imperative SBHC's are to our students.

It is especially important to note that these centers provide barrier-free access to care for children and eliminate challenges presented by transportation, and parents schedules.

SBHC's are at the forefront of providing mental health care for students. Early identification, support and treatment can impact the trajectory of student's mental health and it decreased the stigma of mental health.

SBHC's data continually has shown to contribute to decreased school absenteeism by providing medical, dental and mental health care for our children in their schools.

Mental health professionals have been severely underpaid for years, it takes 8 years to become a licensed clinical social worker or a marriage and family therapist. The overwhelming amount of need has created significant competition within the state. In order to keep these valued and trusted relationships SBHC's are going to need to be competitive and that means absolutely an increase in the line item for cost-of-living wage. As well as for new and expansion of existing SBHC's which has been the recommendation out of the SB 1 Expansion Work group.

Thank you for your consideration. Jill Holmes Brown LCSW Chief Operating Officer Integrated Health Services Inc. .763 Burnside Ave East Hartford, Connecticut 2 06108 860 291-9154

[jbrown@ihssbhc.org](mailto:jbrown@ihssbhc.org) [www.integratedhealthservicesinc.org](http://www.integratedhealthservicesinc.org).

SUBJECT MATTER: Governor's Proposed FY 23 Budget Adjustments

